

Emergency Aid



Amie Jane
Leavitt



Conquering Disease
Emergency Aid
Environmental Protection
Helping Children with Life-Threatening
Medical Issues
Helping Our Veterans
Preserving Human Rights Around the
World
The Quest to End World Hunger
Support for Education

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Introduction

According to the American Red Cross, more than 4.4 billion people have been affected by disasters in the last twenty years. Just think about that statistic for a minute: that's roughly three times the number of people living in China, the world's most populous country! Every year, approximately 200 million people (about the population of Brazil) are impacted in some way by disasters such as floods, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, chemical spills, fires, tornadoes, tsunamis, typhoons, earthquakes, and droughts.

When disaster strikes, human beings seem to have an innate desire to help their neighbors in need. It doesn't matter if those "neighbors" literally live right next door, in another city or state, or on the other side of the globe. When a natural disaster happens, people immediately come together and start pooling their resources in order to help those who desperately need it.

CHAPTER 1



A Little Help When It's Needed Most

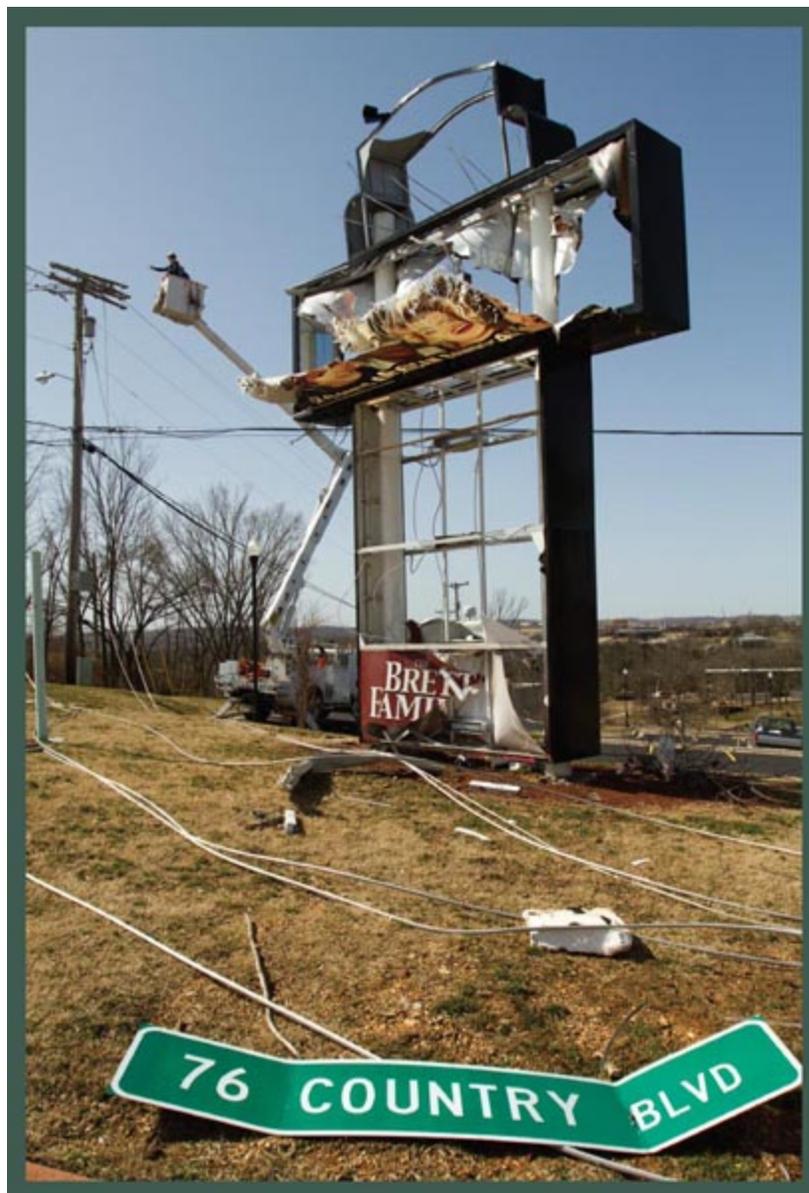
The date was February 29, 2012. In the middle of the night, a tornado snaked through the town of Branson, Missouri. It was an EF2 tornado, with winds between 120 and 130 miles per hour. When the tornado touched the ground, it stretched 400 yards across, which is the same size as four football fields extended end-to-end. EF2 tornadoes aren't the most severe tornadoes, but any tornado can cause a great amount of damage if it strikes the right area. And that was definitely the case with this Branson, Missouri, tornado.

Sections of the town were severely damaged. The tornado literally ripped things apart, picked them up, and flung them about. In places, the land looked more like a landfill than a town: debris, furniture, cars, and torn-apart houses were heaped together in giant mounds. Those who were unlucky enough to own a home in the path of the tornado lost everything. Their homes were destroyed. Their personal belongings were scattered about.

Immediately following the tornado, disaster relief organizations arrived on the scene. The specialists from these groups got in touch with the people who had lost their homes. They made sure they had a safe place to stay, food to eat, and personal hygiene items. The specialists also helped people reunite with their family members and contact their insurance companies to make the necessary claims.

CPR Training to the Rescue

Rewind back in time to November 2011. A seventeen-year-old named Reid Heiser was working at a community recreation center in his hometown of Monroe, Michigan. Suddenly, a man named Jim Hammer collapsed as he was playing tennis. Reid rushed to Jim's side. Jim was unconscious and not breathing. Reid immediately started performing CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) on Jim and kept at it until the paramedics arrived.

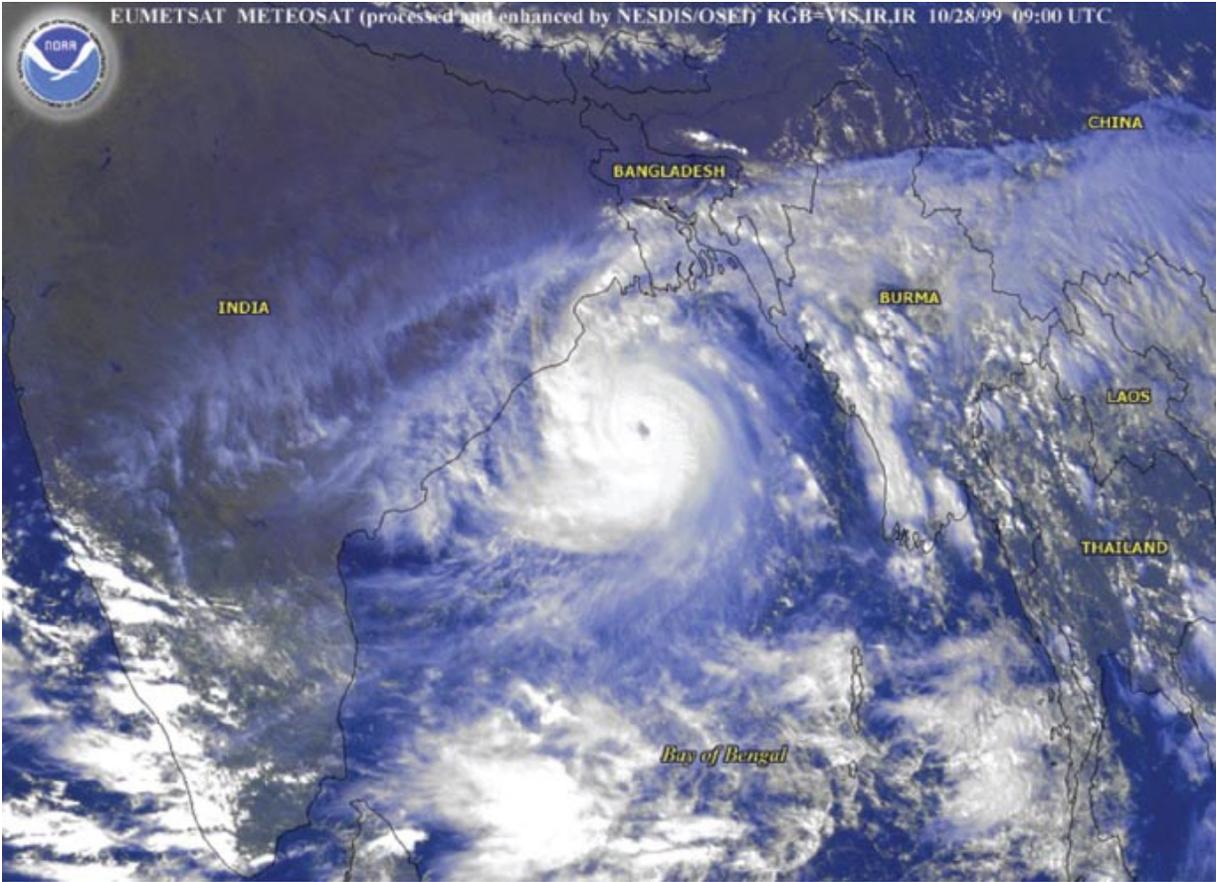


Branson, Missouri, is famous for its many theaters which are located on 76 Country Boulevard. The live shows in these theaters attract tourists, but many of these theaters (and their signs) were damaged in the 2012 tornado.



 The Red Cross trains people all around the world in CPR so they will be prepared to help out in an emergency.

Fortunately, Reid had just taken a CPR class offered by the Red Cross the week before. He sure was grateful that he had taken this class so he could help Jim out in such a critical moment. Jim was most definitely glad, too. As he told the American Red Cross, “I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for this guy.”



 The Odisha super-cyclone of 1999 was the strongest recorded storm ever to hit the Indian subcontinent. This massive storm affected more than thirteen million people.

Many people like Reid are trained every day to conduct emergency medical procedures. And those procedures help save lives all over the world.

Advanced Preparation Saves Lives

On October 29, 1999, the Odisha super-cyclone spun across the Bay of Bengal and struck India with a vengeance. Wind speeds exceeded 160 miles per hour, making this storm the strongest to ever hit the subcontinent. Trees were wrenched out of the ground. Roofs were snapped off and catapulted miles away. Power lines were twisted and torn apart. Flood waters raced across highways and rail lines. Ten thousand people lost their lives in this monster storm. Millions more were left homeless, penniless, or injured.

Just fourteen years later in October 2013, another colossal cyclone struck the area: Cyclone Phailin. Wind speeds reached 125 miles an hour. Like the 1999 super-cyclone, the physical damage was severe. More than five hundred thousand homes were damaged, towns were leveled, and electrical grids were destroyed. Amazingly, this time only thirty-nine people lost their lives. Why was there such a significant change in the number of deaths? The people in the area and the governmental leaders were more prepared for Cyclone Phailin. An estimated nine hundred thousand people were evacuated from their homes and sent to shelters in school and government buildings. This evacuation was mandatory, especially for people living in coastal and low-lying areas. Government officials also made sure that the food and medicine that would be needed by the people after the disaster was moved close to the shelters before the cyclone hit. The leaders had a plan and because of that more people were able to survive the storm.

Care Packages at a Time of Need

The day after Hurricane Sandy struck the East Coast of the United States on October 29, 2012, a woman named Celeste Grimes took a morning walk with her children. Her neighborhood in Far Rockaway, Queens, New York, didn't look anything like it had the day before. Seaweed hung from the walls of the local school building. Cars were overturned. Debris was pushed up against houses and sand from the beach covered the street in thick, wavy layers. The Grimes family, like all of the other families in the neighborhood, didn't have running water or electricity in their home. Thus, they had to collect water at a nearby fire hydrant and lug it up eleven flights of stairs to their apartment. Within days, all of the food in their freezer and refrigerator was spoiled. The nearest store that was open for business was almost ten miles away.

The family was particularly grateful for the aid they received from World Vision. They went to their local church and were surprised to be presented with their own personal hygiene kits (one for each family member) that contained many basic necessities: toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, etc. They also received some home cleaning supplies and a family food kit.



After a natural disaster, relief organizations bring food, water, and supplies to people who have lost everything.



 After Hurricane Sandy, large portions of New York City were without power. Here, only Midtown Manhattan has electricity while many other parts of the city were left in the dark.

Millions of People Helped Every Year

Anyone who has watched the news in the last few years has witnessed relief efforts such as these firsthand. For example, in November 2013, the most powerful typhoon ever to make landfall struck the islands of the Philippines with nearly two-hundred-mile-per-hour winds. The islands hit were devastated. Cities were completely leveled. Millions upon millions of people were affected directly by the storm—many of them lost everything they owned and had nowhere to live. Soon after the storm subsided, however, relief was on its way. Charitable organizations and governments from around the world immediately sent crews and supplies. In addition, millions of dollars were raised towards the relief effort. In just over one week's time, more than \$81 million had been contributed by donors including individuals, organizations, and governments. One-fourth of that, or \$20 million, came from the United States.



The US Marines are often some of the first responders on the scene of a natural disaster. Here, they help displaced Philippine nationals at Villamor Air Base in Manila, Philippines, after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013.

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